



NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE

c/o Department of Biology  
Princeton University  
Princeton, N.J.

# FEDERAL SECURITY AGENCY

U. S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH

~~SECRET~~

January 29, 1953

Dr. Joshua Lederberg  
Department of Genetics  
University of Wisconsin  
College of Agriculture  
Madison 6, Wisconsin

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

Thank you for your letter of January 21st. I find myself inclining to the view which is more or less expressed in my book, that neobiogenesis was to a certain extent a product of the conditions existing on the earth at a given period, including of course the lack of any living systems at the time, plus some relatively improbable event or events. I find it difficult to subscribe to the idea that such a process is going on today; although, as you suggest, some of the steps may be going on.

You suggest that you want to put your ideas on the origin of life together from a geneticists view point. I hope you will do this and I should be very interested in seeing the paper. You ask me to send you reprints on the subject. My own two papers previous to the book are pretty much discussed there, although I will try to find copies to send you. The one on photosynthesis has little bearing any more.

As to your request that I make specific references to the pages in the book that reflect my contributions to the subject, I feel that my only contribution to the subject is a synthesis, and that there are no particular parts of the book that I would want to emphasize beyond others. I have been considerably concerned with asking questions which I hope that others like yourself will help to answer.

Sincerely yours,

Harold F. Blum